

REMARKS

The Office Action of July 21, 2008 has been reviewed and the Examiner's comments carefully considered. In the Office Action, the claims have been restricted under 35 U.S.C. §121 between the following allegedly distinct inventions:

- I. Claims 13-21, drawn to a carrier for supporting and engaging semiconductor product during separating of the product using laser light.
- II. Claims 22-24, drawn to a method for supporting and engaging semiconductor product during separating of the product using laser light.

The Examiner asserts that the inventions of Groups I and II are related as a process of making and a product made by the process. The Examiner contends that the two are distinct because the product claimed can be made by another and materially different process in which the severed semiconductor product is completely removed from at least one hole in the flat plate.

The Applicants hereby provisionally elect for further prosecution the invention of Group I, claims 13-21, drawn to a carrier for supporting and engaging semiconductor product during separating of the product using laser light.

The election is made with traverse for the reasons set forth below.

Applicants respectfully traverse the restriction requirement with respect to Groups I and II. The present application is the U.S. national phase of International Application No. PCT/NL2004/000040. For the U.S. national phase of international applications, the Examiner is to apply the principles of unity of invention given in PCT Rule 13, 37 C.F.R. §1.499; M.P.E.P. 1893.03(d), as opposed to the restriction practice of 37 C.F.R. §§1.141-1.146 that has been applied here.

Under the unity of invention principles, the Applicants assert that Groups I and II relate to a single inventive concept because the technical relationship among the Groups involves the same or a corresponding special technical feature. This special technical feature is a carrier plate having holes allowing underpressure to be applied to hold the semiconductor product in place during and after separating the product using laser light. It is noted that the International Searching Authority has reviewed the international application

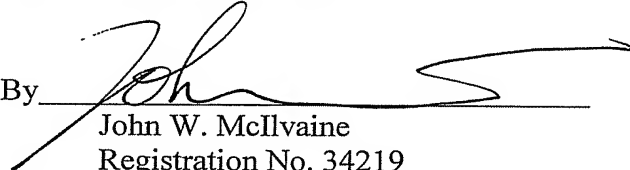
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and found that the subject matter of the corresponding claims satisfies the unity of invention standard and should be maintained in a single application.

Further, Examination of Groups I and II does not pose an undue burden on the Examiner. When searching and examining the Group I apparatus claims, the Examiner will also encounter subject matter set forth in the Group II method claims which use such an apparatus. Therefore, a separate search would not be required.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully request that the restriction requirement be withdrawn. Should the restriction requirement be maintained, Applicants reserve the right to file a divisional application or take such other appropriate measures as Applicants deem necessary to protect the inventions recited within the non-elected inventions.

Respectfully submitted,
THE WEBB LAW FIRM

By 

John W. McIlvaine
Registration No. 34219
Attorney for Applicants
436 Seventh Avenue
700 Koppers Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
Telephone: (412) 471-8815
Facsimile: (412) 471-4094
E-mail: webblaw@webblaw.com